

INVASIVE SPECIES FACT SHEET

Japanese honeysuckle (*Lonicera japonica*)

Description: Japanese honeysuckle is a perennial trailing or twining woody vine in the Honeysuckle family (Caprifoliaceae). Vines may grow to 9-12 meters (30-40 feet) in length depending on surrounding vegetation. Japanese honeysuckle is semi-evergreen so its growing season starts in early spring and vines often hold leaves into winter.



photo by: Jil M. Swearingen

The leaves are oblong to oval-shaped, opposite, and 3-7.5cm (0.5-3 in.) long. Flowers are white or yellow, very fragrant, and bloom from late April to August. The trumpet-shaped flowers have curved stamens that project from the petals and occur in pairs from between leaves. The seeds are 3-3.3 mm long, black, shiny, flat on one side and 3-ribbed on the other. Stems are woody with dense hair or fuzz.

Habitat: Originally from Japan, *Lonicera japonica* was brought over to the U.S. in 1806 as an horticultural ground cover. It was widely established in the U.S. by the early 1900s and has now spread across the east and midwest.

Japanese honeysuckle occurs primarily in disturbed woodlands, roadsides, fence rows, pastures, old fields, and canopy gaps. It can also invade mature forests and open woodlands such as post or pin oak flatwoods. Once established it can endure low light levels without noticeable growth, then respond to increased light with vigorous growth.

Distribution: Japanese honeysuckle is found throughout the eastern, central, and southwestern part of the United States. In Kentucky it is found throughout the state.

Threat: Japanese honeysuckle is a threat because of its ability to thrive in many types of disturbed and natural areas. Its prolific vines grow over other ground cover and can engulf young trees. The density of stems can prevent establishment of native vegetation.

Control: Small or initial populations can be controlled by hand-pulling plants or by using a grubbing hoe.

In areas where vines are already established, cut the vine at the base and treat the stump with a 25% solution of glyphosate (Roundup) or triclopyr (Garlon) and water.

For large populations it may be necessary to apply a foliar spray. Apply a 2% solution of Roundup or Garlon and water to thoroughly wet all leaves. Do not apply so heavily that herbicide will drip off leaves. The ideal time to spray is after surrounding vegetation has become dormant (October to November).



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